

VZCZCXRO8211
PP RUEHAST
DE RUEHVB #1199 2761345
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 031345Z OCT 06
FM AMEMBASSY ZAGREB
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6734
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS ZAGREB 001199

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SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PREL](#) [HR](#) [BK](#)
SUBJECT: MUTED ZAGREB REACTION TO BIH ELECTIONS

Sensitive but unclassified - please handle accordingly

1.(U) Both PM Sanader and President Mesic attributed Bosnian elections results (wherein an ethnic Croat from the Social Democratic Party of BiH was elected as the Croat representative in the BiH presidency) to a lack of unity among Bosnian Croats with similar "I told you so" statements. Speaking from a Council of Europe event in Strasbourg, Sanader told the press, "The most important thing is that the elections passed off fine. As far as the election results are concerned, you know that we did not wish to, nor do we want to, meddle in B-H's internal affairs. However, we did tell the Croats [in B-H] they would need to achieve unity for a multi-party coalition. I have always advocated - and this will remain my position - that in order to protect their status as a constituent nation with equal rights [in B-H], Croats need to get together and unify themselves so that they can join forces and protect their status as a constituent people in B-H who can enjoy equal rights." Mesic spoke even more bluntly, saying, "Croats in Bosnia-Herzegovina have become disunited, but they have not been disunited by someone else, they have done it themselves."

12. (SBU) COMMENT: The moderate disappointment expressed by Zagreb, mirrored by straightforward press reporting, reflects how Croatia's focus has shifted toward the west in the decade since hostilities ended. Although Croatians are obviously still connected through politics, business and family ties to their ethnic kin in BiH, they are increasingly willing to leave the Bosnia Croats to fend for themselves in Bosnian elections while Croatia concentrates on Euro-Atlantic integration. END COMMENT
BRADTKE